



Winston H. Hickox
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California Regional Water Quality Control Board

Los Angeles Region

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Gray Davis
Governor

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Samuel Unger
Unit Chief, TMDL Unit 2

DATE: August 21, 2002

**SUBJECT: UPPER SANTA CLARA RIVER CHLORIDE TMDL
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND TRANSMITTAL OF
TENTATIVE BASIN PLAN AMENDMENT AND STAFF REPORT**

On October 24, 2002, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) will consider a proposed amendment to the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region* (Basin Plan) to incorporate a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) to reduce chloride loading to the Upper Santa Clara River. A public hearing is scheduled for Thursday, October 24, 2002 at 9:00 A.M., in the Board Room of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, 700 N. Alameda Street, Los Angeles, California. At the public hearing, the public will have opportunity to comment on the proposed TMDL.

A copy of the Staff Report for the Upper Santa Clara River Chloride TMDL is included and posted on the Regional Board's web page. The web address is <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb4/html/meetings/tmdl/tmdl.html>. Please contact Elizabeth Erickson at 213-576-6683 or Sam Unger at 213-576-6784 with questions or to request additional copies of the staff report and related materials.

Oral presentations should be summarized in writing to the extent possible. Time limitations on presentations may be imposed. In order to review and to assess comments, the Regional Board staff must receive written comments no later than 5:00 p.m. on October 7, 2002. Comments should be submitted to:

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Los Angeles Region
320 West 4th Street
Los Angeles California, 90013

ATTN: Elizabeth Erickson

Background

The proposed amendment would incorporate into the Basin Plan a TMDL to reduce chloride loading to the Upper Santa Clara River. As background, the Regional Board considered chloride

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loading to the Upper Santa Clara River in December 2000 when it considered a proposed water quality objective revision from 100 mg/L to 143 mg/L. In consideration of increasing chloride levels in POTW effluent and the Upper Santa Clara River, the Regional Board adopted an interim discharge limit of 143 mg/L based on an annual rolling average with an instantaneous limit of 180 mg/L and directed staff to prepare a TMDL for consideration. However, the long term existing limit of 100 mg/L was maintained. The interim limit expired in January 2001.

The Regional Board's goal in considering the above-mentioned TMDL is to reduce chloride levels in the Upper Santa Clara River so that the River can continue to be used for Agricultural Supply and to eliminate the risk of future impairments that may be associated with aquatic life and rare and endangered species habitat. Chloride has been associated with reduced crop yields for salt-sensitive crops such as avocados and strawberries which are grown in the Upper Santa Clara River watershed and irrigated with water from the Santa Clara River. Chloride at concentrations above 230 mg/L has been shown in experimental studies to cause reduced viability in freshwater aquatic species.

The Regional Board is charged with implementing the provisions of both the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (California law) and the federal Clean Water Act in the Los Angeles Region. Section 303(d)(A)(1) of the Federal Clean Water Act requires the Regional Board to identify water quality limited segments within the Region (i.e., those water bodies not attaining water quality standards), and establish TMDLs for the pollutants causing the impairments. A TMDL specifies the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive and still meet water quality standards, and allocates the acceptable pollutant load to point, non-point and natural sources. The TMDL can be expressed in terms of either mass per time, toxicity, concentration, or other appropriate measures.

Analysis of the extensive chloride monitoring data collected from POTW effluents and within the Upper Santa Clara River has consistently shown that chloride concentrations exceed the water quality objective. The Regional Board staff has prepared this TMDL to address the documented chloride water quality impairments in two reaches of the Santa Clara River near the Los Angeles/Ventura County line.

The TMDL establishes a phased plan for reducing the loading of chloride to the Santa Clara River. It also sets forth a number of studies, including one to consider a site-specific objective for chloride in the Upper Santa Clara River, if appropriate. The purpose of this TMDL is to remove the chloride water quality impairments that prevents Upper Santa Clara River from supporting the AGR beneficial use. It involves reducing the sources of chloride from households and industries that are discharged to the Saugus and Valencia WRPs, and if necessary, constructing a chloride removal system to treat the WRP effluent before discharge to the Santa Clara River.

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